

Durham County Board of Social Services

Regular Session Minutes

July 19, 2023

The Durham County Board of Social Services monthly meeting was held on Wednesday, July 19, 2023, in the DSS Board Room with a virtual option via Microsoft Teams.

The following DSS Board members were in attendance: Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs, Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman; Board members: Jacqueline Beatty-Smith, and Charles I. Mitchell.

The Durham County Department of Social Services was represented by the following: Director Maggie Cveticanin, Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy and Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman; Assistant Directors: Jovetta Whitfield, Rhonda Stevens, Antowan Pickett, and Interim Lee Little.

DSS staff attending included: Candice Leathers, Latoya Chambers, Meghan Russ, Jennifer Moon, Tonia Gay, Nancy Santos, Quannah Jackson-Brown, Shontelle Smith, LaVelle Chesney, Susan Lee, Lynn Thomas, Emma Perry, Pamela Purifoy, and Montrella Springfield.

Danielle Briggs, Senior Assistant County Attorney was present.

James Hart, DSS Human Resources Analyst attended the meeting.

Commissioner Wendy Jacobs called the July 19, 2023, regular meeting to order.

Election of Officers

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith nominated Commissioner Wendy Jacobs as Chair of Durham County Department of Social Services Board. Board member Charles I. Mitchell seconded. Unanimous vote by the DSS Board members.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs nominated Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman for Vice Chair of Durham County Department of Social Services Board. Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith seconded and the DSS Board voted unanimously.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs read the Public Charge and moved forward with Public Comments.

Public Comments

No public comments

Approval of the Agenda

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs requested adding the LEIAP Agreement to the Proposed Agenda and asked the board members to review and approve the proposed agenda with a new agenda item. Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman offered the motion to approve the amended proposed agenda and Board member Charles I. Mitchell seconded.

The agenda was unanimously approved.

Board member	Yes	No	Abstained
Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs	Yes		
Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman	Yes		
Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith	Yes		
Board member Charles I. Mitchell	Yes		

Approval of Minutes

Minutes for June will be reviewed at the August meeting for approval.

Chair Report

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs acknowledged Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman for chairing the meeting last month. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked staff for assisting with the recognition of Board member Janice P. Paul and apologized for her absence. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs asked members to encourage interested individuals to apply for the

vacancy. Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman is sharing the vacancy with people in the community.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs conveyed the biggest item on the radar is Medicaid Expansion. State legislators have not approved the budget. This will be a big challenge with changes along with FNS and the public health emergency ending. Chair Commissioner Jacobs requested an update from leadership. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked Pamela Purifoy for responding to emails relating to access to food benefits and information from Food Security Coordinator reminding people of free summer meals for children and youth. Information is going out to the community through social media.

Another issue coming is centered around Voter ID. The guidelines around Voter ID are older county employees can use their ID for the election if there is a date on it. NCCU and Duke faculties and students ID will be valid as well. There are some issues with Durham Tech, they must reapply to add dates. DSS has always been a part of voter registration and Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs suggested partnering with Derek Bowens head of the Board of Elections. Information will be going out with tax bills, however, 50% of the population are not homeowners, which will take partnering with the community. There has been discussion about library assisting, however, DSS has a large contact with people in the community. The Board of Elections in each county will have the authority to issue IDs to people. The focus is to make sure that people are able to vote due to the important elections coming.

The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approved employees a 7% increase across the board implemented from the compensation study and additional 3%-4% merit increase.

The BOCC announced at the July 23, 2023, meeting that applicants are being solicited for boards and commissions. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs will follow up with the Clerk to the Board. Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman wants to make sure the information is accessible.

Director's Report

Director Maggie Cveticanin submitted a written report.

Director Maggie Cveticanin introduced the new Customer Accountability and Talent Development (CATD) Assistant Director Antowan Pickett to the DSS Board. Assistant Director Pickett comes from North Dakota, but he is from the Durham area. Assistant Director Antowan Pickett gave a brief introduction. Assistant Director Pickett was born in Pender County and graduated from NCCU obtaining a BSW in 2005. He worked in Franklin and Wake counties and completed his internship at Durham County. Assistant Director Pickett was Director of Human Services in North Dakota and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to return to Durham.

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman is a professor at NCCU in the MSW, BSW program and is elated to share this with students.

DSS Board members welcomed Assistant Director Antowan Pickett to Durham County DSS.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs inquired about Cynthia Cason. Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy stated Mrs. Cason was unable to attend but acknowledged her for stepping up as Interim Assistant Director for the last several months. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs communicated appreciation from the DSS Board.

Director Maggie Cveticanin conveyed that the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) is delaying the implementation of the Medicaid tailored behavioral health and intellectual developmental disabilities. It was scheduled for October 1, 2023, but the new date will be determined later. They want to make sure everyone receives their benefits.

Medicaid expansion has stalled due to continuous negotiations related to the budget. NCDHHS request to start 1915 services for eligible for NC Medicaid members as of July 1, 2023, was approved. These services are in-home, and community based which provide opportunities for Medicaid recipients to receive services in-home or community based rather than institutions.

NCACDSS Executive Board Meeting was held July 13, 2023, and the focused on the State budget as well as the retreat report.

Director Maggie Cveticanin and Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield met with A.N.D. District Court Judge Walker and Chief District Court Judge as an introduction and learn more about the NC court system.

Also, a meeting was held with Roshana Parker, Assistant Director at Justice Services to discuss a Memorandum of Understanding to provide cognitive behavioral health and substance abuse services to families involved in the Foster Care or In-Home programs. The start date will be in August or September.

Director Cveticanin reached out to County Attorney Andrews to schedule a follow-up meeting.

Interviews for the Assistant Director in Aging and Adult Services have moved forward, the Deputy Director position closed, and interviews will begin in late August.

Director Cveticanin and Deputy Director Williamson-Hardy met with Durham Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Pascal Mubenga to discuss a possible pilot project focused on prevention and earlier engagement with families when children are exhibiting concerning behaviors. Director Cveticanin helped create a program in Florida that identified children with signs of behavioral issues. The child would be referred to a multidisciplinary team. The team would come together, bring in the family and talk to them about services and navigate them through the behavioral health system. Superintendent Dr. Mubenga was positive about the partnership. Meetings will be scheduled with other critical partners within the next month and work can start to develop a pilot.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked Director Maggie Cveticanin on behalf of the DSS Board for the incredible work. Director Cveticanin has been here a short time reaching out to people forming partnerships and addressing issues in the community. Gudrun Parmer started the justice services before retirement which is locally funded. Chair Commissioner Jacobs is elated Director Cveticanin is dealing with this issue that tends to make things so complicated. Chair Commissioner Jacobs conveyed one of the aptitudes someone from the outside brings is experiences from other localities.

Director Maggie Cveticanin acknowledged Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy for introducing her to community leaders. DSS Leadership and Management staff were acknowledged for their support.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs asked the DSS Board if they had comments or questions. Board members expressed their gratitude to Director Cveticanin and DSS staff.

Family Economic Independence (FEI) – LaToya Chambers, Program Manager

Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens submitted a written report in her absence.

Program Manager LaToya Chambers represented FEI in Assistant Director Rhonda Stevens' absence.

On June 28, 2023, the agency's Annual Hunger Awareness event was held. FEI staff along with Pamela Purifoy handed out 100 bags to people coming to the agency. Usually, staff go into the community, but since the lobbies were open and services have been expanded the bags were given at the agency. Bags were given to Urban Ministries, and they were appreciated. Meetings are conducted weekly related to FNS and Medicaid. New processes are being looked at to assist staff and they have great ideas to help smooth out the working processes. The unwinding process has caused reinventing and additional training.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs credited FEI management for communicating changes to staff and receptive to feedback.

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith commended FEI staff for passing the Medicaid Report Card since April 2020.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs inquired about the 17 recommended positions. James Hart, HR Analyst stated that the lead worker positions have been filled. The trend is in the right direction and hoping to benefit from the approved salary study and merit increase. Filling some of the supervisory and lead worker positions will provide additional support to staff where they are moving and turnover tends to occur. The Job Fair is August 5, 2023, official flyers have been sent to Pamela Purifoy for additional marketing. Applications have been received, and numbers are expected to go up. Interviews will be held between 10:00am-3:00pm. The subcommittee is working hard to think through the process and items needed for success. Managers are moving hiring packets timely. Recruitment opportunities with new salaries and internal things to change how we bring people in and promote internally. There are several leadership positions being advertised on LinkedIn and Facebook which have a QR code.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked James Hart and the committee for their great work. Chair Commissioner Jacobs recognized the organizing and planning to make the event a success.

Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy agreed James Hart and staff have worked extensively on planning the job fair. Applicants will be interviewed on-site, which will create a pipeline to fill positions. Deputy Director Williamson-Hardy conveyed staff will be returning from the Social Services Institute and will be at the event on Saturday.

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith inquired about the positions. Board member Beatty-Smith gave kudos to staff working on the committee and the ability to interview on the spot. James Hart replied the positions are Income Maintenance Caseworker II and there is a process in place where if someone has skills they are applicable for Income Maintenance Caseworker III.

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman requested the information to be sent to the undergraduates.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked Program manager LaToya Chambers for conveying FEI highlights and moved to the Customer Accountability and Talent Development.

Customer Accountability and Talent Development (CATD) – Antowan Pickett Assistant Director

Interim Assistant Director Cynthia Cason submitted a written report.

Assistant Director Antwon Pickett reported that the mobile app was down June 28th through July 10th causing a huge backlog of work on several hundred documents. The Records Management Team was able to catch up on the backlog in one and half days. Gratitude was expressed to staff for working to complete the backlog. This was a huge asset to the client not losing their benefits.

The internship program will be kicking off in August and starting with two MSWs from NCCU. There are interests from other universities and they will be reviewed after the first semester. Interns have received their packet for background check and drug screening. This is a pilot program to evaluate and make revisions if needed, therefore, starting the program off slow.

Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman excited about the internship program she has advocated for since beginning as a member of the DSS Board.

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith asked how long the interns will work.

According to Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman interns will have to work for a year or two semesters.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked Assistant Director Antowan Pickett for the report. Vice Chair Commissioner Jacobs complimented Cynthia Cason for completing the detailed report.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs went back to the mobile app going down. Chair Commissioner Jacobs thanked staff for working overtime on the task and hope this will not happen again. Director Maggie Cveticanin met with the County and the next time anything of this magnitude happens DSS will be contacted immediately. Director Cveticanin reiterated staff sitting around the table working. County IT thought it was an update in process, but it was a system problem. Communication is important and was discussed because there are repercussions at the State and Federal level.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs inquired about the interest from other universities. Simmons University, UNC Chapel Hill, NC State University have reached out about the internship. Assistant Director Antowan Pickett asked Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman how to flag collaborative students. After completing their internship, they can apply for a position with the County with one year experience. as well as, Assistant Director Pickett will work with James Hart, HR Analyst to inform Human Resources about the collaborative student within child welfare and make sure something different is in place for interns. Vice Chair Dr. Monique Holsey-Hyman mentioned the barriers for interns and will connect with students. Vice Chair Dr. Holsey-Hyman consulted with Simmons University and talked about the internship program at DSS.

Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith inquired about students being disqualified because interns usually receive credit for their work. There has been an issue with collaborative students not being hired at Durham County. Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked Assistant Director Antowan Pickett for the update on the internship program. James Hart, HR Analyst indicated in the past the County was big on individuals who did not have a particular experience, within the last five years it has shifted to competencies. The collaborative paused for a period of time. Currently, DSS will consider intern experience and move them forward. James Hart has spoken with students at NCCU about how they can demonstrate their experience in the wording of their resume, which was very helpful.

Child and Family Services (CFS) – Jovetta Whitfield, Assistant Director

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield submitted a written report.

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield asked the Board if they had any questions.

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield reported the DSS proposal was accepted, and staff will be presenting at Kemple International Conference. Natasha Harcum, Supervisor and Erika Ward are social workers who partners and work with the families. They have attended the meeting for the last three years. Shontelle Smith, Program Manager and Assistant Director Whitfield have supported staff, and they have been working with family partners with NC State to make this happen. Durham is one of four counties implementing a family engagement committee. The presentation will be presented at the DSS Board meeting. This is a virtual conference. Public Health has inquired about the Family Engagement Committee meeting. Assistant Director Whitfield considers this as a pilot and feels it is something other communities and organizations would like to know about how we are engaging families. Also, engaging youth to have a voice on how child welfare is operating. Information will be forwarded to Pamela Purifoy, Sr. Public Information Officer to help publicize.

Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield highlighted the impact capacity and the workload stated at the State. This has been extended to July 28, 2023; therefore, they extend the report in October regarding what they found. Specifically, how long it takes to work on a case, the time spent versus the capacity. This is important because it can impact retention particularly since the child welfare practice standards are changing. In the CATD report one of the challenges for QAT staff is keeping up policy changes which are the same in child welfare. According to Assistant Director Whitfield it is a challenge to keep up with changes, making sure staff are aware and providing them with what they need to be in compliance. Every month something is new and there is a concern about how to address it.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs requested the presentation to the DSS Board when it is better for staff. Chair Commissioner Jacobs recommended Pamela Purifoy contacting Deborah Craig-Ray regarding getting this on the BOCC agenda for a ceremonial item to recognize this honor for DSS staff.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs asked about partnering regarding trauma. Assistant Director Whitfield stated they have to see what the State is saying, and a lot is being approved by the federal government.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs inquired about the end of the community response program with the Family Exchange Center and the impact. Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield responded that was a grant from the State and Durham was one of the counties participating in the community response grant. It started out as one year, later expanded and was beneficial. Referrals were being sent to the Exchange Family Center to provide the services. The impact is small because DSS has another contract with the Exchange Family Center and families are referred for parenting which is different from community response. It is a case management component. Shontelle Smith added they are looking into how they can continue to offer a similar service although the numbers were low in the past three years.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs touched on Director Maggie Cveticanin pursuing services at the Justice Center and services are being cut in other areas. Assistant Director Jovetta Whitfield replied this is a prevention service that is critical and did not have the budget to continue.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs pointed out that staff going to conferences and hope this will continue. Staff professional development is important. Chair Commissioner Jacobs asked if there is adequate funding for staff to attend conferences. Funding is available and staff are being encouraged to attend.

Deputy Director Catherine Williamson-Hardy added that they are looking at bringing resources internally because some areas don't have conferences and opportunities. Training is being approached differently in programs.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs thanked staff for the report and moved to Aging and Adult Services.

Aging and Adult Services (AAS) – Lee Little, Interim Assistant Director

Interim Assistant Director Lee Little submitted a written report.

Interim Assistant Director Lee Little mentioned the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day observed on June 15, 2023. It is a global campaign to raise awareness about the abuse and neglect of older people. This was a collaboration with the Quality Assurance Team. Information was distributed and good feedback was received from people.

AAS conducted a division meeting and past Assistant Director Janeen Gordon provided training along with Director Maggie Cveticanin. This was an opportunity for staff to connect and it was a good celebration along with a learning professional development. Chair Commissioner Jacobs thanked Interim Director Little for the background information in the report.

There was a question related to the special assistance waiting list cleared. Interim Assistant Director Lee Little stated that a lot of work getting this together, the State gave them a pass and pushed to get rid of it urgently. Program Manager Meghan Russ, Supervisor Prudence Glover and other supervisors were able to get the wait list down. Two new vendors for In-Home Services were added and received training in June. They will help in various capacities and give more flexibility. Funding was received from the HCCBG grant.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs acknowledged the work of retired Assistant Director Janeen Gordon and thanked Lee Little for accepting the Interim Assistant Director role. Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith extended gratitude to him and congratulated him on clearing the wait list. Also, concern about not having access to NC FAST and the need to do the work around resulting in errors. There has been discussion about collaboratively working with QAT during audits for that specific program. Dual access is needed for the team to move forward with eligibility more efficiently.

Program Manager Meghan Russ agreed with the information provided and added they are exploring different roles for energy staff. Other counties have shared their process. The State has been contacted regarding guidance of having multiple roles in NC FAST.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs inquired about this being County IT issue. Program Manager Meghan Russ is not clear if the issue is external or internal and can not receive a straight answer from the representative.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs asked about other challenges and if there have been conversations with partners like Food Security Group about the wait list for meals. There are 345 people currently on the wait list. There have been conversations in the community addressing the food needs for seniors.

Interim Director Little stated they are on several committees where food insecurities are the hot topic and making sure the older adults have the proper food nutrition. Social workers are working through the list, however, when people are removed, additional people are added. Meals on Wheels is the best resource; food banks and Durham Center for Senior Life have meals.

Chair Commissioner Jacobs questioned how much money left related to different housing. There was a concern about numbers in coordinated entry. Approximately 832 people applied and basically 74 people received assistance.

This program is for the homeless partnered with Urban Ministries. Anyone homeless will receive assistance getting them on the shelter list at Urban Ministries and we provide food cards and transportation. Urban Ministries is responsible for helping with jobs or some type of income to maintain a voucher. Also, the Eviction Diversion Program helps with the gap.

The Tax Program is slated for the BOCC Work Session on August 7, 2023, and to be approved on August 14, 2023. ERAP hopefully will be on the calendar for August 26, 2023.

Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman and Assistant Director Margaret Faircloth

A written report was submitted to the DSS Board.

Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman mentioned August is Child Support Awareness Month. Child Support met 4 out of 5 incentive goals. Total collections were the only ones not met and that is a State issue. There has been \$15.4 million of child support collected this past year. People in the community appreciate the work staff are doing for families. An event will be held August 17, 2023, to acknowledge incentive goals, top performers, and training.

Program Manager Quannah Jackson-Brown met with Chief Judge Clayton Jones and the Clerk's Office on how to make the court run smoothly and invest service to families and the community who rely on those funds. Congratulations to Quannah Jackson-Brown and the Child Support Team!

Quannah Jackson-Brown thanked Chief Operations Officer Kelly Inman. Collections were about 98.92% and were \$100,000 of meeting the goal. Incentives 4 out of 5 met all self-assessments.

The Child Support Team worked hard and diligently along with partnering agencies to accomplish the task.

Information Technology is a hot topic relating to Northwoods Traverse which handles forms management, case management, document management, and mobility solutions. It is in the process to go before the governance of the County to determine how it will be funded. It is eligible for ARPA funding, and we could ask to be rolled in some of our budget. The plan is to have a two-year implementation with one being AAS and CFS followed by FEI and Child Support. We have been assured of a decision by August 1, 2023.

We continue to review ERAP funding and estimating by December funds will be depleted.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked Chief Operations Officer Inman for the report and acknowledged Quannah Jackson-Brown along with the Child Support Staff.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs asked about the parking deck. There have been some concerns from Public Health and Social Services. Assistant County Manager Joanne Pierce has been contacted to help address security concerns.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs moved forward with the request for approval for the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program

Interim Assistant Director Lee Little requested the DSS Board's approval for the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program. Board member Charles I. Mitchell offered the motion to approve the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program. Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith seconded the motion. The contract was approved. Board member Jacqueline Beatty-Smith requested corrections to minor edits on the document. Edits are needed on pages 1-3 before submitting.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs thanked everyone for attending and encouraged staff to take time off for relaxation.

Chair Commissioner Wendy Jacobs adjourned the DSS Board meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

_____	_____
Chairperson	Date

_____	_____
Secretary to the Board	Date